



BY CHARLES F. GORDON III, MD

New York Pain Management, PLLC



Jim asks: *“I had to get my leg amputated due to diabetes two years ago and I continue to have pain from my amputated leg. I wear a prosthesis and had it checked by my doctor who says there is nothing wrong with the artificial leg. What could be causing my pain?”*

Post-amputation pain is not uncommon and can be caused by a variety of different sources. After amputation, many patients have phantom limb pain—the sensation that their missing limb is still there—which can cause both physical and psychological discomfort. Phantom limb pain can resolve on its own or can be treated with a variety of different medications. Other sources of pain include a formation of a painful neuroma (an irritated nerve ending that is formed after surgery) along the end of the limb. This can be treated with medication or an injection that blocks the particular nerve being irritated. Unfortunately, sometimes medications and injections are unable to fully resolve an amputee’s pain, and in those cases a spinal cord stimulator (which blocks the pain signals from being

transmitted along the spinal cord) can give patients significant pain relief and allow them to resume their normal activities and function. Consult your local board certified pain physician for more information.

Al asks: *“What could cause lower back pain with muscle aches, back of the leg numbness, and hip pain? My MRI showed no signs of spinal problems. Pain radiates down my leg. I am also dizzy and have aches in many other areas.”*

The problem with low back, hip, and/or leg pain is that there can be a variety of different causes, and these different causes can unfortunately present very similarly. Different muscles, nerves, ligaments, tendons, bones, and joints can all cause pain complaints similar to yours. Furthermore, certain medications and metabolic, electrolyte, and endocrine imbalances can produce similar pain complaints as well.

Our job as pain physicians is to narrow down, from over a hundred different possible sources of pain, to

the one or two actual causes of pain you are experiencing. The first step is to perform a detailed history and physical examination to better identify the cause. As a patient, the better you can describe your pain, the better we can help determine the source. Helpful information includes character (whether it is burning, achy, shooting), location, duration, and intensity. Other important clues include what sorts of activities or positions make the pain better or worse. History of any previous accidents, falls, or surgeries will also prove helpful.

A thorough physical exam will provide even more information that, along with imaging studies or nerve tests, can provide an even fuller picture. Different sources of pain require different treatment options, so identifying the source is the key to treatment. So, whether your pain is caused by lumbar spinal stenosis, hip arthritis, piriformis syndrome, or diabetic peripheral polyneuropathy, a board certified pain physician can help you determine your pain source and help set you free from pain.

Liberate yourself from the constraints of chronic pain with New York Pain Management.

Our goal is to significantly reduce or completely eliminate your pain.

Take the first step towards living pain free call us today at 518-371-0777.

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